

I am writing in opposition to Raised Bill #5397 and #477.

I am opposed to the bill HB5397 for a number of reasons. The committee members proposed in the bill seem to be biased and unlikely able to present an unbiased report of the data that is proposed to be collected. The idea that a group of activists could find anything other than data they seek to support their argument is preposterous. The bias would be further enhanced by the grant funding they would also be wielding without oversight. This bias is unlikely to support the real issues of mental health and income inequality that are more of an issue than an inanimate object.

It is also suspicious that the bill as proposed lacks participation by any members of the substantial citizenry that make up the legal gun owners and related businesses in the state. As a member of this unrepresented community, I also want to see a reduction in the senseless shootings and deaths caused by criminals. The demonization of an inanimate object is pointless. Criminals do what criminals do.

I would suggest the State of Connecticut instead spend the money on a permanent staff to research the actual data that can be derived from the available sources. A staff of 10 for \$1,000,000 per year should be able to report the data and deal with developing intake strategies to enrich the data. Ensure the data gets released in a raw format that includes the points of collection and methods to maintain transparency. I expect the dataset will show LEGAL gun owners are not the issue, but would highlight pressure points that can be worked on.

Take the remaining \$4,000,000 per year and work on ways to improve the urban areas that are disproportionally affected by crime with programs to foster entrepreneurship to create jobs. Getting rid of disparity and helping Connecticut to create jobs and communities around them will do more than spending \$5,000,000 per year on more biased gun control.

Again, legal gun owners are not the issue here. Lack of hope and lack of money (jobs) is more of an issue that leads to violent mental health outcomes. I hope your research project remembers to get to a root cause that can effectively illustrate a way to get Connecticut back to being prosperous for all and worthy of being called the Constitution state.

Sean Barrett  
Canterbury, CT